

LEE LI MING
PROGRAMME IN
AGEING URBANISM

Housing for Older Population¹

Republic of Korea

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While the United States has taken 73 years to grow from an ageing to aged society and Japan 24 years, the Republic of Korea is expected to accomplish this age transition in 18 years and Seoul (its capital city) 14 years. Fuelled by economic growth and medical technology development, Seoul's older population is increasing by 50,000 per year. By 2011, there were 1 million (450,000 male and 590,000 female) people aged 65 and older in Seoul. Of these, 210,000 (60,000 male and 150,000 female) were living alone and the elderly suicide rate was 64.4 people per 100,000 people (the highest among OECD countries) while its elderly poverty rate (45.1% in 2006) was three times the OECD average. Seoul is projected to become a super-aged society by

¹ This is an evolving database. We will be adding more examples and cases over time.

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2027 with its elderly population rising to 20.3% (1.95 million people).

Age-friendly City

Faced with unprecedented ageing, the Mayor of Seoul has announced as early as 2008 that Seoul would be an ‘Age-friendly City’ with a 3-10 plan, comprising 10 new day care centres within each city district, no more than 10 minutes from any resident open until 10pm. The Seoul Metropolitan Government has adopted a strategy of age-friendly city and joined the World Health Organisation Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities (June 2013) to promote age-friendly city at the municipal level more efficiently. The Seoul Age-Friendly City strategy involves:

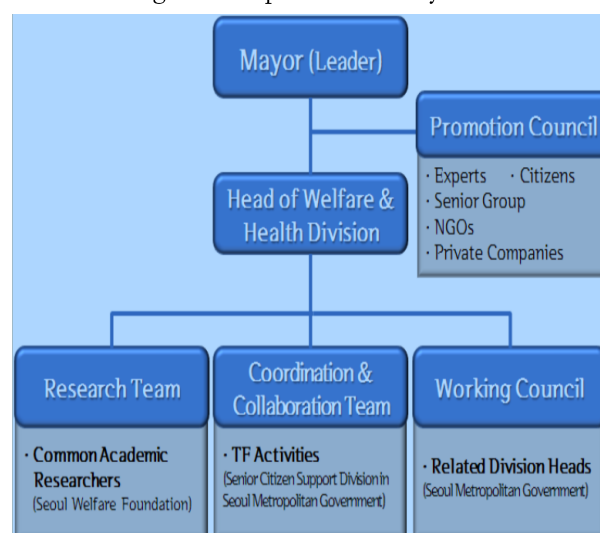
Step 1- Formulating the 2020 Aged Society Master Plan in 2010. The vision is to develop Seoul into a healthy, active 100-year life expectancy city by 2020. The policy direction is to create a new paradigm for elderly welfare, expanding into all urban areas (including housing, transportation, culture and health for the elderly), developing customised policy and provision of customised services according to elderly demands (including pre-elderly groups aged late 40s and 50s as well as those older than 50), integrating and sharing community resources (both public and private resources)

with the objective to create a long-term, integrated policy roadmap to respond to aged society and to realise age-friendly city;

Step 2 - Strengthening the legal system to realise age-friendly city and promote elderly welfare pursuant to 2020 Aged Society Master Plan. It has enacted the Basic Rule for Elderly Welfare for the Realisation of Age-friendly City in July 2011;

Step 3 - Creating and operating the implementation system headed by the Mayor of Seoul supported by a age-friendly city promotion council (comprising experts, NGOs, private companies, senior groups, citizens) and implemented through the Head of Welfare and Health Division, Seoul Metropolitan Government (Figure 1);

Figure 1: Implementation System



Source: S. Lee (2013) Status and Future Plan of Age-friendly City, Seoul: Its evaluation and Development Plan, IAGG/WHO Special Symposium on Age Friendly Cities, 26 June 2013, Seoul.

Step 4 - Assessing Seoul's age-friendliness through survey (September 2011) and development of issues and initiatives (December 2011), drawing on the survey results, for age-friendly city creation in 60 projects in 8 areas of World Health Organisation Global Age-friendly Cities (Box 1);

Box 1: Seoul Age-friendly City Focus Areas

Housing – provide elderly with housing that ensures their safety and self-reliance (Table 1);

Transportation – provide elderly with an environment where they can walk around safely and use mass transportation easily; Outdoor spaces and buildings – provide elderly with safe and comfortable urban living environment (Table 1);

Communication and information – empower elderly to prevent information alienation;

Social participation – support elderly voluntary social participation;

Respect and social inclusion – build a community where elderly are respected through awareness raising and are included in community activities;

Civic participation and employment – create an environment where elderly human capital is fully explored and used;

Community support and health services – expand medical welfare systematically to realise healthy citizen lives.

Source: Seoul Age-friendly City website, Seoul Metropolitan Government
<http://afc.welfare.seoul.kr/afc/sub01/e-sub01.action>
 Accessed 16 January 2015.

Step 5 – Formulating action plan (March 2012), review and meetings of action departments, citizens and relevant organisations (April – September 2012) and announcement of Seoul Comprehensive Plan for Seniors (December 2012), involving 35 projects in 6 priority areas (convenient living environment, support for the second life design, customised jobs, active leisure culture, respect and integration of generations, healthy elderly life), requiring US\$284.7 million investment for 2012-15. The goal is to realise ‘A City of Happy Advanced Age, A City of Double-cropping in Life’;

Step 6 – Formulating evaluation system (May – October 2012) including designing implementation system, comprehensive evaluation indicators and operation plan including monitoring and evaluation by citizens, elderly, experts and Seoul City government.

Table 1: Selected Issues and Solutions - Housing and Outdoor Spaces - of Age-friendly City, Seoul

Selected Areas	Baseline Assessment (Issues)	Initiatives (Solutions)
Housing	Support self-help life in village-oriented community	
	The elderly are greatly exposed to safety accidents at home	Inspect safety to prevent safety accidents
	The elderly prefer to stay at home and in the community together with neighbours rather than to be admitted to facilities	To help the elderly in their original residential areas, prepare village community support systems to help the community to continue to be integrated
	The elderly are not properly provided with consulting and support services relative to housing problems	To create safe, stable housing environment, install and operate housing support centre
	Multi-unit housing areas are not systematically maintained and managed	Villagers voluntarily create an environment to manage multi-unit housings
	Supporting elderly houses' living expenses	
	Even home-owned elderly see their income decrease, so they feel burdensome about the cost of remodelling their houses	Support the house remodelling cost for the elderly
	Low-income elderly feel greatly burdensome about rent and house maintenance costs	Bolster financial support for low-income elderly people's housing stabilisation
	Elderly households' subscription to elderly housing pension system is low	Publicise the housing pension system along with education about raising the awareness thereof
	Expanding and supplying customized elderly residential facilities	
	There is a shortage of diverse elderly residential facilities.	Expand and supply customised elderly residential facilities
Outdoor spaces and buildings	Bolstering urban stability and convenience	
	Greatly anxious and feared about being exposed to crimes when going out at night.	Continue to conduct public security activities and to expand relevant facilities thus preventing crimes and creating a safe urban environment.

	There is a shortage of infrastructures responding to emergency situations (injuries, falls, outbreak of diseases, accidents, run away from home, missing).	Use communication devices and build emergency support systems (hotline) with public agencies.
	The use of non-disabled facilities is set as an option, limiting the general use of them.	Expand the barrier-free certifications for public agencies and private-sector facilities.
Embodying a pleasant city to live in together		
	There is a shortage of convenience facilities and relaxation spaces easily available for the elderly.	Expand green park areas and public pedestrian spaces, and continue to manage them.
	Call for a continued management of relevant infrastructures to create a pleasant urban environment.	Bolster the management of environment to maintain clean air and to decrease noise and foul smells.

Source: Issues and Solutions of Age-friendly City Seoul, Seoul Metropolitan Government

<http://afc.welfare.seoul.kr/afc/Issues%20and%20Solutions%20of%20AFC%20Seoul.pdf> Accessed 17 January 2015.

Even though age-friendly cities are being developed globally, questions remain about what constitutes ‘age-friendly’ community and how best to deepen age friendly culture in Seoul. Each year, the Seoul Metropolitan Government would evaluate its age-friendly city project performance and the older population’s awareness of the city’s age-friendly policies and their quality of life so as to improve the quality of its elderly policies under its guiding principle of ‘Seoul We Create Together, Seoul We Enjoy Together’.

Source: S. Lee (2013) Status and Future Plan of Age-friendly City, Seoul: Its evaluation and Development Plan, IAGG/WHO Special Symposium on Age Friendly Cities, 26 June 2013, Seoul; Seoul Age-friendly City website, Seoul Metropolitan Government
<http://afc.welfare.seoul.kr/afc/sub01/e-sub01.action>
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